

1. A method of providing information obtained over a computer network to a plurality of users each using a remote computer, the method comprising:

obtaining a plurality of investor profiles each specifying a user's investment preferences;

defining at least one task as a function of the investment preferences;

monitoring information about one or more financial instruments by at least one of the plurality of tasks being executed on a client computer;

receiving from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments;

and

distributing the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising initializing and executing the task on an agent.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising creating an assignment for each task to record information thereabout on a database.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising managing a priority of each assignment such that an assignment having a higher priority is distributed to an agent before an assignment having a lower priority.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the priority of each assignment is based upon a number of agents that require completion of an assignment..

6. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments comprises receiving a task report message including a node identification and an identification of the task.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising filtering the information about the one or more financial instruments received from the tasks to determine one or more users that would like to receive one or more pieces of the information based upon the investment strategy of each user.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving from one of the tasks a task report message that includes an identification of the task, a status of the task and at least one piece of information about one or more financial instruments.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

creating an assignment for each task to record information thereabout on a database; and

wherein distributing the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences, comprises:

filtering the information about the one or more financial instruments received from the tasks to determine one or more users that would like to receive one or more pieces of the information based upon the investment strategy of each user; and

distributing the information about the one or more financial instruments to the plurality of users

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising managing a priority of each assignment such that an assignment having a higher priority is distributed to an agent before an assignment having a lower priority.

11. A method of providing information about one or more financial instruments to a remote server over a computer network, the information to be used by at least some of a plurality of users each having an investor profile that includes investor preferences and each using a computer, the method comprising:

receiving and executing one or more tasks on one of the computers of one of the users, at least one of the tasks for monitoring information about one or more financial instruments; and

transmitting the information about the one or more financial instruments to a server such that the server can distribute the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least some of the plurality of users based upon each investor profile.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising verifying a connection with the server.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the one or more tasks each include an assignment that includes information of the type of task, the current state of the assignment, and an identification of the node that is executing the task.

14. A method of providing to a remote computer information obtained over a computer network to a plurality of users, each of the users having a remote computer and each having an investor profile specifying the user's investment preferences, the method comprising:

receiving at least one task defined as a function of the investment preferences;

executing the at least one task to monitor information about one or more financial instruments;

transmitting to the remote computer information obtained from the at least one task about the one or more financial instruments such that the information about the one or more financial instruments can be distributed to the to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the remote computer is a remote server.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising transmitting to the remote computer a task report message that includes an identification of the task, a status of the task and at least one piece of information about one or more financial instruments.

17. An apparatus for providing information obtained over a computer network to a plurality of users each using a remote computer, the apparatus comprising:

a server coupled to the computer network, wherein the server is programmed to:

obtain a plurality of investor profiles each specifying a user's investment

preferences;

define at least one task as a function of the investment preferences;

monitor information about one or more financial instruments by at least one of the plurality of tasks being executed on a client computer;

receive from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments;

and

distribute the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the server is further programmed to create an assignment for each task to record information thereabout on a database.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the server is further programmed to manage a priority of each assignment such that an assignment having a higher priority is distributed to an agent before an assignment having a lower priority.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the priority of each assignment is based upon a number of agents that require completion of an assignment.

21. The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising a task report message that provides from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments, the task report message including a node identification and an identification of the task.

22. The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising filtering the information about the one or more financial instruments received from the tasks to determine one or more users that would like to receive one or more pieces of the information based upon the investment strategy of each user.

23. The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising receiving from one of the tasks a task report message that includes an identification of the task, a status of the task and at least one piece of information about one or more financial instruments.

24. An apparatus for providing information about one or more financial instruments to a remote server over a computer network, the information to be used by at least some of a plurality of users each having an investor profile that includes investor preferences and each using a computer, the apparatus comprising:

an agent programmed to execute on a computer, wherein the agent is programmed to:

receive and execute one or more tasks on one of the computers of one of the users, at least one of the tasks for monitoring information about one or more financial instruments; and

transmit the information about the one or more financial instruments to a server such that the server can distribute the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least some of the plurality of users based upon each investor profile.

25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the agent is further programmed to verify a connection with the server.

26. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the one or more tasks each include an assignment that includes information of the type of task, the current state of the assignment, and an identification of the node that is executing the task.

27. An apparatus for providing to a remote computer information obtained over a computer network to a plurality of users, each of the users having an investor profile specifying the user's investment preferences, the apparatus comprising:

a client computer coupled to the computer network, wherein the client computer is programmed to:

receive at least one task defined as a function of the investment preferences;

execute the at least one task to monitor information about one or more financial instruments;

transmit to a remote computer information obtained from the at least one task about the one or more financial instruments such that the information about the one or more financial instruments can be distributed to the to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences.

28. The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the remote computer is a remote server.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the client computer is further programmed to transmit to the remote computer a task report message that includes an identification of the task, a status of the task and at least one piece of information about one or more financial instruments.

30. A system for providing information obtained over a computer network to a plurality of users each using a remote computer, the method comprising:

a first computer coupled to the computer network, wherein the first computer is programmed to:

obtain a plurality of investor profiles each specifying a user's investment preferences;

define at least one or more tasks as a function of the investment preferences;

receive from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments; and

distribute the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences; and

a second computer coupled to the computer network, wherein the second computer is programmed to:



receive and execute the one or more tasks on one of the computers of one of the users; and

monitor information about one or more financial instruments by executing at least one of the one or more tasks;

transmit the information about the one or more financial instruments to the first computer.

31. An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer readable program code for authenticating a user of a client computer over a computer network, the computer readable program code including instructions for:

causing the computer system to obtain a plurality of investor profiles each specifying a user's investment preferences;

causing the computer system to define at least one task as a function of the investment preferences;

causing the computer system to monitor information about one or more financial instruments by at least one of the plurality of tasks being executed on a client computer;

causing the computer system to receive from the tasks information about the one or more financial instruments; and

causing the computer system to distribute the information about the one or more financial instruments to at least one of the plurality of users as a function of said user's investment preferences.

32. The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the instructions for causing the computer system to initialize and execute the task on an agent.

33. The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the instructions for causing the computer system to create an assignment for each task to record information thereabout on a database.

34. The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the instructions for causing the computer system to manage a priority of each assignment such that an assignment having a higher priority is distributed to an agent before an assignment having a lower priority.

35. The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the instructions for causing the computer system to filter the information about the one or more financial instruments received from the tasks to determine one or more users that would like to receive one or more pieces of the information based upon the investment strategy of each user.

36. The article of manufacture of claim 31, wherein the instructions for causing the computer system to receive from one of the tasks a task report message that includes an identification of the task, a status of the task and at least one piece of information about one or more financial instruments.